

Washington, DC - Today, Congressmen Charles Gonzalez (TX-20) and Phil Gingrey (GA-11) introduced the National Health Information Incentive Act, bipartisan legislation that takes significant steps towards improving the quality of health care received in America. The bill targets small physician practices as the focus of efforts to achieve wide scale adoption of health information technology (HIT), the implementation of which will increase efficiency in health care practices and provides broader access to medical records.

The legislation, introduced in light of last month's hearing of the Small Business Committee's Subcommittee on Regulations, Healthcare, and Trade, tackles the biggest obstacle impeding small practices from implementing this technology - the price tag associated with purchasing and implementing HIT. The bill offers grants, loans, and tax incentives to offset these costs.

Congressman Gonzalez, Chair of the Small Business Committee's Subcommittee on Regulation, Healthcare, and Trade, along with Congressman Gingrey, Co-Sponsor of the National Health Information Incentive Act, issued the following statements on the introduction of this legislation:

"Widespread HIT adoption will revolutionize the standard and quality of healthcare received in America. Just as government investment has catalyzed research in other industries, the incentives provided in this legislation will spark adoption of these technologies, resulting in vast public health benefits," said Rep. Gonzalez (D-TX). "These incentives attack the very root of the problem facing small practices, where a majority of Americans receive their care, by helping them overcome financial obstacles they face with HIT implementation," Gonzalez added.

"The future of American healthcare will be determined in large part by our adoption of health information technology," said Rep. Phil Gingrey (R-GA), a physician. "Right now, the healthcare sector is woefully behind in using technology to reduce medical errors and streamline care. I can go to Antarctica and get cash from an ATM without a glitch, but should I fall ill during my travels, a hospital there couldn't access my medical records or know what medications I take. Our ATMs shouldn't be more advanced than our medical records. As a physician, I know many doctor offices are small businesses, and every dollar counts. By providing financial incentives for doctors to adopt health IT, this bill will get life-saving technology into physician offices and into the lives of American patients," added Gingrey.

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